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New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 104 (*continued*)

Appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Draft resolution (A/61/L.48/Rev.1)

The President: The General Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/61/L.48/Rev.1, entitled "Tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations"

We shall first proceed to take action on draft resolution A/61/L.48/Rev.1. Thereafter, we shall complete the appointment process of the next Secretary-General with the administration of the oath of office.

I give the floor to the representative of the Niger to introduce, on behalf of the African Group, draft resolution A/61/L.48/Rev.1. The draft resolution also enjoys the support of the other four regional groups.

Mr. Abani (Niger) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the States members of the African Group, I have the great honour to introduce draft resolution A/61/L.48/Rev.1, entitled "Tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations".

My delegation would like to express its profound gratitude to all the other States and groups of States that have sponsored the draft resolution. Such sponsorship is a tradition — and it is also logical. The draft takes tradition into account, since the Assembly generally honours the outgoing Secretary-General under similar circumstances. But it is also logical because it reflects the reality, that of an outgoing Secretary-General who has displayed such great professional and personal qualities and who has contributed, through many initiatives that have been welcomed by all, to helping the Organization to make progress towards modernization and democratization.

Mr. Kofi Annan has made many sacrifices and undertaken extraordinary efforts, often under very difficult circumstances. It is with gratitude for those efforts that this draft resolution has been submitted. Furthermore, I know that you, Madam President, share these sincere feelings of affection and esteem, and I am equally certain that they are sentiments felt by all for Mr. Kofi Annan. I have no doubt that the draft resolution will meet with unanimous approval, as attested by the growing list of sponsors.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.48/Rev.1, entitled "Tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations", by acclamation?

Draft resolution A/61/L.48/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 61/107).

The President: By adopting resolution 61/107 by acclamation, the General Assembly is paying tribute to one of the most famous sons of Africa, Secretary-General Kofi Annan. His career has been unique. He has risen through the ranks of the United Nations and

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has devoted his life's service to the Organization. So, today we are not bidding farewell only to the current Secretary-General, but also to one of the longest-serving officials of the United Nations.

As Secretary-General over the past 10 years, he has stood at the helm as the United Nations has become a more effective global actor and as demands for its services have grown. We are grateful to Kofi Annan for having set out a far-reaching reform framework to make the Organization more relevant to the people of the world: a United Nations that lives to serve humanity and the principles of multilateralism. Kofi Annan will leave a lasting legacy. He has guided the United Nations into the twenty-first century with vision and leadership. As a result, the multilateral system is stronger.

The Secretary-General's tireless efforts to promote peace and security were rightfully rewarded in 2001, when both he and the United Nations received the Nobel Peace Prize. Looking back on an outstanding tenure, I wish to reflect upon some of his significant achievements.

First, the United Nations has a clearer sense of purpose and priority. Peace and security, development, human rights and the rule of law are the three pillars of our work. Secondly, through the Millennium Development Goals, we have a programme of action to eradicate poverty and to achieve a safer and fairer world for all, particularly in Africa. Thirdly, one of Kofi Annan's lasting contributions has been to emphasize the interdependence among the global challenges we face today.

It is my sincerest hope that the world will continue to benefit from Kofi Annan's unique experience, wisdom and true dedication to the values and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Secretary-General, I wish you and Nane the greatest success in whatever new challenges you choose to undertake in the future. Thank you very much.

I now give the floor to the representative of Niger, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Abani (Niger) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Secretary-General, as you prepare to leave your post as head of this Organization after 10 busy years of intense activities, of skilful initiatives and of total dedication to the cause of multilateral cooperation, it is a particular honour for me to take the floor on behalf of the African Group to express to you our feelings of pride and gratitude for the remarkable work that you have accomplished. Our heads of State or Government have already expressed to you their great satisfaction and pride at the end of your outstanding tenure in the United Nations as a skilled master of multilateralism aware of his responsibilities towards Africa and towards the international community as a whole.

Mr. Secretary-General, at this final moment, when you pass the torch to your successor, we can only, once again, welcome the fact that our continent has given the Organization one of its finest sons, who was able to make an outstanding contribution to the functioning of today's world. During both of your terms, the world faced many and complex challenges; you were able to make use of your leadership qualities, and your insight so often helped the international community to find a way out of an impasse. Africa, your home continent, has particularly appreciated your efforts to implement programmes relating to the fight against AIDS and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as your bold initiatives for peace and conflict resolution, human rights and the promotion of sustainable development.

Your re-election in 2001 to a second term was striking proof that Africa is not the only region satisfied with your contribution to the Organization. Moreover, your unequalled efforts to increasingly open the United Nations to civil society, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the press will also go down in history as a praiseworthy endeavour.

However, such results cannot be achieved without difficulties, sometimes even brutal ones. But you have been able to overcome all of them with a grace — I would say, even with a calm — that stirred the admiration of all.

Now that you are leaving the forefront of the world stage, we venture to welcome you to the African stage: the Africa you have never stopped loving and serving; the Africa which is grateful to you for having held high its torch for 10 years and which is ready to welcome you once again. What the African Group is saying to you today is more of an "au revoir" than a "farewell".

I would like, Sir, to take this opportunity also to repeat the African Group's welcome to your distinguished successor, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon. The African Group, through me, once again expresses to him its congratulations and is pleased to be able to benefit from the experience and skills of a person who will be able to lead the United Nations towards a better world.

The new Secretary-General, as a national of an Asian country, is, we feel, in a good position to know and grasp the matters of urgency to the African continent on all the current issues. As Africa promised him at the time of his appointment on 13 October (see A/61/PV.31), Africa will continue to support him in all of his efforts aimed at strengthening the United Nations and to promote multilateralism.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Asian Group on this special occasion to pay tribute to the Secretary-General and to administer the oath of office to the Secretary-General-designate of the United Nations.

It was 10 years ago that Mr. Kofi Annan was first sworn in as Secretary-General of the United Nations. We all acknowledged that the job with which he was entrusted was the most difficult and challenging job in the world. The Secretary-General is expected to hear the cries of people from different parts of the world — people who are crying out of fear, hunger and other states of destitution — and to deliver them from their plight, while managing an Organization that is charged with ever-increasing responsibilities while being constrained by ever-limited resources.

Ten years on, and at the end of his illustrious career, we are pleased to note in absolute candour that Mr. Annan has fulfilled the responsibilities entrusted to him. He saw this Organization through many trials and tribulations and onwards into the new millennium. In 2001, in recognition of his leadership and commitment to making the world a better place to live, the United Nations was accorded the Nobel Peace Prize for its work for "a better organized and more peaceful world".

The Asian Group is pleased to note that Mr. Annan leaves behind a legacy that sets the path for us to follow towards making the world a better and more peaceful place to live. He has shown to us that, with commitment and strong will, no challenge is impossible and no obstruction is irremovable. We applaud Mr. Annan for his commitment, dedication and steadfast stand towards that end.

The Asian Group wishes to place on record our appreciation to Mr. Kofi Annan for his long, illustrious service to the United Nations and, in particular, for his service as the Secretary-General of the Organization. We wish you, Mr. Kofi Annan, all the very best in your future undertakings.

As we bid farewell to Mr. Kofi Annan, we take comfort in knowing that the important post of Secretary-General of the United Nations is in the safe and steady hands of Asia's very own Mr. Ban Ki-moon. As Chair of the Asian Group, I would be remiss not to mention outright how proud the members of the Asian Group are at having a new Secretary-General from Asia.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon is now entrusted with all our hopes, aspirations and dreams for a peaceful and prosperous world. It is an honourable and heavy responsibility that he takes on as Secretary-General of the United Nations. The States members of the Asian Group will extend our full support and cooperation to him as he leads the United Nations forward.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mrs. Mladineo (Croatia): On the occasion of today's meeting, I have the special honour of speaking on behalf of the Eastern European Group to bid farewell to His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan. We honour Mr. Annan for his efforts and his tireless dedication to the work of the United Nations. As the first Secretary-General to be elected from the ranks of the career United Nations staff, Mr. Annan was highly aware of the burden and responsibility he was to carry as the highest-ranking civil servant in the world. His record is proof that immense professional and personal efforts bear fruit. Receiving a mandate in times of historic changes that have reshaped the world, Mr. Annan played an essential role in the life of the Organization.

As Secretary-General, he was confronted with a number of challenges within the Organization and in the international arena. The Organization needed to be revitalized. There was an urgent need for reform that

would bring the United Nations in line with the needs of a changed world. At the same time, in the international arena, processes had been triggered by the phenomenon of globalization, the new post-cold-war architecture and the growing importance of human rights and the dignity of individuals, sustainable development, the empowerment of women, as well as other issues that needed adequate responses.

Mr. Annan's mandate was marked by some of the most dramatic of crises around the world, resulting in human suffering on an unprecedented scale. Our part of the world was not immune. For that reason, we highly appreciate the role of the United Nations and Mr. Annan's personal engagement in his various roles during times of crisis.

As a Secretary-General, Mr. Annan has constantly reminded world leaders about the plight of the defenceless and the underprivileged. In the recent years, Mr. Annan focused his attention on creating and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, eradicating hunger and poverty and fighting HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, among other endeavours. He was also an ardent advocate for human rights and development.

Kofi Annan leaves us with the legacy of an unprecedented document, "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), which provides the conceptual framework for substantial overall reform of the United Nations and for its role in the new millennium. While many segments of the document are being implemented, we are aware of the many challenges ahead of us, such as terrorism and ongoing armed conflicts, and the challenges of peacebuilding and fighting hunger and poverty. We must remain committed to addressing them.

Life at the helm of a world body such as the United Nations requires the professional commitment, personal dedication and sacrifice that Mr. Annan was always ready to offer. That was recognized by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize that Mr. Annan and the Organization received in 2001 for their continuous efforts to maintain peace and security.

Allow me to conclude by quoting Mr. Annan himself who said, "More than ever before in human history, we share a common destiny. We can master it only if we face it together" (*press release SG/SM/7262*). We truly believe that Mr. Annan will continue to participate in this common effort even in his private capacity.

Allow me, Secretary-General Annan, to thank you in the name of the Group of Eastern European States and on behalf of my fellow ambassadors for your continuous cooperation and support, and to convey to you our wishes for a rich and meaningful time ahead of you.

At the same time, I would like to convey our appreciation to the incoming Secretary-General, and to transmit our best wishes to him for what lies ahead.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Grenada, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Ms. Rouse (Grenada): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group on this bittersweet occasion, as we bid farewell to His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan upon the completion of a decade of meritorious service to the United Nations and the international community, and as we welcome His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon to the Organization.

"Never walk into an environment and assume that you understand it better than the people who live there". Those were the words of Mr. Annan after he had experienced the harsh realities of his first winter in Minnesota in 1959 — words that seem to have guided him throughout his United Nations career.

For the past 10 years, statements from this very rostrum have welcomed several of the Secretary-General's reports on various agenda items, many of which he has personally led to successful completion. Mr. Annan will be remembered for many initiatives, among them the Millennium Report, "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" (A/54/2000). Perhaps the one that will always stand out among the many milestones of his tenure is the agreement on and declaration of the Millennium Development Goals in the year 2000. These Goals remain the bedrock standards to be achieved by all countries by the year 2015.

The Secretary-General also adopted many personal priorities. His call to action to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to be one of the most challenging tasks facing leaders as they grapple with numerous new and emerging global realities.

Reform of the United Nations has been at the heart of Mr. Annan's purpose-driven tenure. The Member States of Latin America and the Caribbean wish to take this opportunity to thank him for that profound initiative and to reiterate our commitment to continue vigorously with our contribution to the process of meaningful reform of the Organization in the years ahead so that it can better serve the poor and dispossessed of our world.

Mr. Secretary-General, you will always be remembered for your famous dictum that security cannot be achieved without development, development cannot be achieved without security, and neither can flourish unless the rule of law and respect for human rights are present. We salute you for your willingness to tackle head-on the many challenges facing the Organization.

You have already informed us of your intention to continue your work even during retirement, assisting African countries in realizing their full potential and in becoming food self-sufficient. That announcement is hardly surprising: as you have kept the international community close to your heart for so many years, it would now be difficult to fully withdraw.

In your speech to the Assembly on 19 September 2006 (see A/61/PV.10), you listed three great challenges — security, development, and human rights and the rule of law — which you faced upon your assumption of office in 1997. Leading an Organization so diverse is no easy task, and although you did list some regrets and certain challenges that you had been unable to completely overcome, we know that your desire was to see this body grow in strength and in stature. Indeed, your work was recognized when the Organization was accorded a Nobel Peace Prize in 2001.

Mr. Secretary-General, "we the peoples" will forever be our guiding principle, and if we interpret the Charter the way that you did, the United Nations will be well on its way to achieving its purpose. Your example will continue to be a basis for the work of the United Nations in years to come. We will always remember your quiet dignity, your stoicism in times of trouble, your wisdom and your sense of humour.

Your skilful leadership has been a tremendous asset to the work of the Organization, and you should be justly proud. Ghana, and indeed Africa, must certainly be elated about the achievements of such an illustrious son of the soil in the arena of international peace and security. We thank you especially for your efforts in finding solutions to the crises that we in Latin America and the Caribbean faced during your term. We congratulate you on a job well done and wish you every success, personal contentment and fulfilment in the coming years. To your dear wife, Nane, whose constant and quiet support has helped and sustained you through a most difficult and testing mission, we say thank you, farewell and Godspeed.

As we embark upon a new era at the United Nations, may I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States, to once again extend a warm welcome to the Secretary-General-designate, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and to assure him of our full support as he assumes his role at the helm of the Secretariat of the Organization.

The President: I now call on the representative of Malta, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Bonavia (Malta): I have the pleasure and honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

On this important occasion, I should like to express our great appreciation for Mr. Kofi Annan's outstanding performance as Secretary-General over the past 10 years. Mr. Annan's dedication to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations has been exemplary. During his tenure, he has initiated far-ranging reforms that will have a lasting effect on our Organization. He has shown exceptional courage and determination in the pursuit of peace, development and human rights.

Mr. Annan has been at the helm of the United Nations during a period that has witnessed upheaval, uncertainty and frustrated hopes. New threats have arisen, compounding many of the unsolved problems inherited from the past. The community of nations continues to be severely challenged in its quest for peace and security, for development and the elimination of poverty, disease and suffering, and for the promotion and defence of individual rights. The objectives enshrined in the Charter — to promote peace, social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom — remain as vital as they were six decades ago.

Mr. Annan's life and career have been dedicated to meeting the challenges and nurturing the aspirations of our times. His priorities as Secretary-General have been to revitalize the United Nations through a comprehensive programme of reform; to strengthen the Organization's traditional work in the areas of development and the maintenance of international peace and security; to encourage and advocate human rights, the rule of law and the universal values of equality, tolerance and human dignity, found in the United Nations Charter; and to restore public confidence in the Organization by reaching out to new partners and by, in his words, "bringing the United Nations closer to the people".

The road has been paved with difficulties and setbacks. One recalls the tragic day of 19 August 2003, when 17 officials were killed in Baghdad. But there have also been major highlights. On 10 December 2001, as head of the United Nations, Mr. Annan received the Nobel Peace Prize, in the Nobel Committee's words, in recognition of the way that he had "been pre-eminent in bringing new life to the Organization".

Mr. Annan's experience in his office reminds us of the words of the first Secretary-General, Trygve Lie — which are often quoted — that this job is the most impossible one on Earth. The response of Mr. Annan to that sentiment is characteristic of his determination and resilience: he sees it as the best job on Earth. The job of Secretary-General is both daunting and exhilarating. The man who has carried it out so successfully for the past 10 years is indeed impressive.

Mr. Annan leaves his post with the best reward to which a public servant can aspire: the satisfaction of a job — that of Secretary-General — well done. In addition, he takes with him our deepest admiration and our best wishes for the future.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the United States, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Mr. Wolff (United States of America): We salute today Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his decade of dedicated service as the United Nations chief diplomat and administrator.

Since early in his first term, Kofi Annan has worked tirelessly to make the United Nations a more efficient and effective Organization. He has understood the need for the United Nations to evolve and reform to meet the challenges of today's world, and to use its resources wisely to better serve its Member States and the millions of people who look to the United Nations to help them improve their lives.

He has used his good offices and the resources of the United Nations to address numerous conflicts, potential conflicts and other threats to international peace and security, and was recognized for his efforts with a Nobel Peace Prize.

He has done his utmost to ensure that Africa has remained prominent on the global agenda and to keep the world's attention focused on that continent's security, humanitarian and development needs. He has been a strong voice condemning terrorism, and has pushed the United Nations to do its part in the global struggle against extremism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and terrorist threats.

He has been a champion of human rights, urging Governments to respect the rights of their own citizens, to speak out in response to human rights violations wherever they occur, and to make the United Nations own human rights machinery more effective.

He rightly recognized that the United Nations needed to reach out to the private sector for resources and expertise, and he has led the way in forming productive new partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and business.

He has been an intellectual force in global dialogue, providing a steady stream of ideas and proposals that helped shape the framework of the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit.

Perhaps his overriding goal has been to make the United Nations and its programmes and services more accessible and more responsive to the needs of ordinary people, and especially to those who often find themselves at particular disadvantage — women, children, refugees, the displaced and the poor.

Kofi Annan has many other accomplishments to his credit, large and small, in his 10 years of service and leadership as Secretary-General, and over his entire 44-year career with the United Nations. He has been driven by his belief that the individual matters, that nations can act together to make the world a better place, and that the United Nations was the instrument for turning his beliefs into action.

Beginning 1 January, the Secretariat will be entrusted to the capable hands of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who commands our full respect. In his long and distinguished career, he has served with honour and integrity. We have no doubt that those virtues will carry over into his tenure here as Secretary-General. We have full confidence in his abilities, his goodwill and his desire to serve and to achieve. A number of challenges remain, particularly in the area of management reform. We look forward to working with the new Secretary-General and other Member States to achieve our shared goal of making the United Nations stronger and more effective and thus further honour Kofi Annan's vision.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of South Africa, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Madam President, let me thank you once again, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, for having given us an opportunity to honour the legacy of our beloved Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, one last time.

In one of the finest hours of the United Nations, under the leadership of Kofi Annan, the largest number ever of heads of State or Government came to New York in September 2000 to attend the Millennium Summit. They adopted the historic Millennium Declaration, which stated, among other things:

> "We believe that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people. For while globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed." (*resolution 55/2, para. 5*)

With those few words, the heads of State or Government attending the Millennium Summit captured what I believe to be what Secretary-General Kofi Annan is essentially about. That is, Kofi Annan has tried his best to give globalization a human face. He has been at the forefront of the struggle against poverty and underdevelopment. At the same time, he has stood tall in defence of the heavily challenged multilateral rules-based system, even in difficult times. The Group of 77 and China is proud and honoured to have been among the foot soldiers of "General" Kofi Annan throughout the fight for global economic and social development. We are pleased to have supported the Secretary-General in protecting the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which guide the work of the General Assembly.

There are no words to describe the way we feel on such a special and historic occasion as this — the eighth time that the Office of the Secretary-General is receiving a new occupant. On the one hand, we are proud that Kofi Annan, the son of African soil, has served the world with honour and has now reached the point where he can move to the more relaxed — and, I daresay, more predictable — future that lies ahead. On the other hand, we are delighted that the great continent of Asia has once again given to this Organization one of its best and most capable sons in the person of Secretary-General-designate Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to whom we pledge our support in helping him achieve the best for this Organization.

Long before globalization brought us instant communication technology that often leaves us with little time to think or analyse what we have to say, people around the world used to write letters to each other, even to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I hope, Madam President, that you will allow me to read my letter to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, a letter that I believe expresses the feelings many of us have for him.

> "Dear Secretary-General Kofi Annan,
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> "Many words will be spoken today and in the near future about how much we will miss you. It is true that your calming influence and wisdom — indeed, your inspiration and dignity — will be greatly missed. But the greater truth is that those whose hearts will be torn asunder most by your departure are the poor and the underprivileged of this world. They include millions whose lives are withering away under the onslaught of curable and incurable pandemics such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. I also daresay that on 31 December 2006, when you leave your office, the light of hope for the people of Palestine, who live under occupation, will shine even less bright.
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> "One thing that you can take away from New York with great pride is that throughout your term, you always kept faith with the downtrodden and the underprivileged. You always spoke softly,

but your voice was loudest when you fearlessly told the truth to the powerful, reminding them never to forget those who are called the least among us. And when circumstances forced you to stay quiet, your silence was even louder.

"Today, the world is engaged in a race — albeit a very slow race at this time — to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The fact is, however, that we are able to discuss the development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, because of your leadership and commitment to the poor.

"You have also helped change the global dialogue by forcing us to focus simultaneously on three challenges: the security challenge, the development challenge and the challenge of upholding human rights and the rule of law. With great passion, you have made a convincing argument that there can be no security without development, and that neither can be enjoyed without human rights and the rule of law.

"In short, you have always been one of us. We are privileged to have known you.

"In conclusion, may I remind you, Secretary-General, that five years ago, you accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of this beloved United Nations, to which you gave more than 40 of the best years of your life. In the Nobel lecture that you delivered in Oslo, Norway, you began by saying:

> "'Today, in Afghanistan, a girl will be born. Her mother will hold her and feed her, comfort her and care for her — just as any mother would anywhere in the world. In these most basic acts of human nature, humanity knows no divisions. But to be born a girl in today' s Afghanistan is to begin life centuries away from the prosperity that one small part of humanity has achieved. It is to live under conditions that many of us in this hall would consider inhuman. Truly, it is as if it were a tale of two planets.'

"One of the most eloquent and gifted souls to come from the part of Asia that you referred to in your Nobel lecture is none other than the mystical poet Rumi. In his writings and poems, Rumi captured the life of ordinary people and spoke of unity and togetherness.

"Speaking of togetherness, I cannot end this tribute to you without at the same time saluting Mrs. Nane Annan, whom you have called your life partner, your strength and your friend who has been with you even in the darkest days. For us, watching both of you from afar, we will never forget how Nane has always been at your side, exuding quiet strength and sending a message to all those who come to serve this United Nations with spouses and families that there indeed is life beyond the resolutions, the declarations and the endless meetings in the basement of this Assembly building. For that, we thank Nane.

"So, in celebration of a job well done, and in recognition of your tireless efforts to strengthen the United Nations, allow me, Secretary-General, to conclude by offering you a gift of the words of the poet Rumi, who is the spiritual great-grandfather of the girl born in Afghanistan whom you recalled in your Nobel lecture. The words of Rumi recognize that, even though there may be a public and a private life, there is only one existence that is captured in the moment:

> "'Out beyond ideas of wrong-doing and right-doing,
>
> There is a field. I'll meet you there.
>
> When the soul lies down in that grass, The world is too full to talk about.
>
> Ideas, language, even the phrase *each other* do not make any sense.'

"With those words, allow me once again, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, to say goodbye, dear friend."

But, as in any good letter, there is also a P.S.:

"By the way, Secretary-General, you can relax wherever you go. Your legacy and your achievements are now in the good hands of Mr. Ban Ki-moon, whom we will support just as we did you."

The President: I now call on the representative of Finland, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Ms. Lintonen (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The European Union would like to join other delegations in expressing our deep appreciation to Mr. Kofi Annan for his uncompromising dedication to the common good of humanity during his term as Secretary-General of the United Nations. He has made an outstanding and lasting contribution to practically every field of activity in which the Organization is engaged: peace and security, development and human rights, as well the internal reform of the United Nations.

It has often been remarked that, of all the impossible positions in the world, that of Secretary-General of the United Nations must be the most impossible. All the hopes of humankind focus on the United Nations; all the fears are brought to its door. The Secretary-General is the embodiment of the Organization. His voice is the voice of the nations of the world united.

One of the most remarkable achievements of Mr. Annan is that he has been able to build such a consensus on how to address so many of the seemingly intractable problems that the international community has faced during the past decade. Moreover, he has had the strength of character to provide the necessary moral leadership to show the way forward even when we, the Member States, have been too distracted by our national concerns to perform that function.

As Secretary-General, Mr. Annan has played an invaluable role in the revitalization of the United Nations system. He has had a clear vision on how this institution — which was created 60 years ago under very different circumstances — could be reformed in a way that would allow it to respond effectively to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Annan has been a particularly eloquent and persistent spokesman for human rights and the rights of women. He has reminded us that it is the welfare of the individual that is at the core of the mission of the United Nations, regardless of the particular field of activity. It was largely thanks to his efforts that heads of State or Government gathered in New York in September 2005 to express their joint conviction that peace and security, development and respect for human rights are fundamentally interlinked. That understanding, together with the institutional expression given to it in the form of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, will be a lasting monument to the accomplishments of Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

It is thus with profound admiration and gratitude that the European Union wishes to express its appreciation to Mr. Annan for the remarkable work he has done in his present role. We look forward to supporting him in his future endeavours for the good of humanity. We also want to thank Mrs. Nane Annan for her contribution and support, and we wish her all the best.

In today's world, the challenges facing the Secretary-General are enormous. On behalf of the European Union, I also want to wish the incoming Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, every success in carrying out these important responsibilities. We look forward to working in close cooperation with him.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Iraq, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is an honour and a pleasure for me to speak today on behalf of the Group of Arab States to express the Group's gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Kofi Annan for his efforts of the past decade — the culmination of his more than 40 years of service to the United Nations. I wish to commend his tireless pursuit of the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In the first five years of his tenure, Mr. Kofi Annan led the Organization in a manner that enabled it to tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century. In the past five years, we have witnessed unprecedented dedication on his part in moving the process of United Nations reform forward. That constituted an important turning point in the life of this Organization, with the most important milestones being the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the Human Rights Council.

During the 10-year period in which he has been at the helm of the Organization, the world has seen major international political, security, economic and social developments, as well as many challenges to international peace and security. We have all noted his tireless efforts to extinguish fires and settle disputes and wars, as well as his constant endeavours to arrive at peaceful settlements to thorny questions.

The Middle East was one of the hotbeds of tension on which Mr. Kofi Annan focused his attention. He has worked to achieve an honourable and just solution to the question of Palestine — one that would guarantee peace and security in the Middle East region. He has stood side by side with the Palestinian people in their time of crisis, in support of their right to self-determination and to the establishment of their independent State.

Africa can be proud of its illustrious son. We would say to Africa that Kofi Annan, following his honourable record in service of the United Nations and its purposes and principles, is no longer a son of Africa alone; he is the son of all of humanity. It is a great pleasure for us to recognize his dedication in service of the United Nations. His legacy will live on in the annals of the Organization.

I am also pleased and honoured, on this important occasion, to extend, on behalf of the Arab Group, our heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Ban Ki-moon of the Republic of Korea on his election as Secretary-General. He is fully qualified to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor. There is no doubt that he will bring to that Office the diversity and human wealth of the Asian continent. Those attributes will also serve well in leading the Organization and in building bridges of understanding and dialogue among cultures. The world's diversity will therefore become a force for unity and strength, not a cause for conflict and weakness. We are hopeful that his skills will contribute to the achievement of our common objectives of peace, security and development. We hope also that his expertise in international relations will help us to arrive at the peaceful settlement of disputes.

We hope also that, during his tenure at the helm of the Organization, the question of Palestine will receive the attention it deserves and that a Palestinian State will finally be established.

I would like to reaffirm the Arab Group's determination to provide every possible support to Mr. Ban Ki-moon, so that he can undertake the important responsibilities he is shouldering as eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Finally, we wish Mr. Kofi Annan a prosperous future in the service of humanity.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Cuba, who will speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mrs. Núñez Mordoche (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the privilege to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on this very special occasion, as the Organization and its Members gather to bid farewell to and recognize the achievements of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan.

The Non-Aligned Movement takes this opportunity to express its deep appreciation for the outstanding work done over these past 10 years by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, as well as for his devotion to the Organization.

There is no doubt that much could be written about the character and intelligence shown by Mr. Annan throughout his tenure at the helm of the United Nations.

I am sure that my colleagues will agree that it is no easy task to lead the United Nations — an international Organization whose purposes and principles, enshrined in the Charter, are, inter alia, to maintain international peace and security, facilitate international cooperation, and promote economic development and social equity. Indeed, Mr. Annan's great diplomatic skills have helped to shape the United Nations we have today.

An honoured son of the brotherly African continent, he has used the ancient wisdom of its peoples in seeking solutions to humankind's most important problems. The Non-Aligned Movement thanks him for the vital role he has played in addressing the many global challenges that exist. The Non-Aligned Movement acknowledges his contribution to international peace and security and his tireless efforts to achieve a better world. We will always remember him for having consistently included development concerns on the international agenda. The Millennium Development Goals are a case in point.

We also acknowledge his human sensitivity, reflected in his personal commitment to tackling the pandemic of HIV/AIDS, which affects millions of people throughout the world. We are confident that the Organization will build upon its past achievements and move ahead to become an even more effective body under the leadership of the new Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Non-Aligned Movement would like to welcome Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and pledges him its full support and cooperation. He is about to take on what a former Secretary-General once described as the most impossible job on Earth. But Mr. Ban Ki-moon comes from a region where patience, modesty and wisdom are virtues. We are sure that he will be equal to the new responsibilities that Member States have entrusted to him and that he will make the best use of the authority invested in his office by the Charter.

On behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, I wish Mr. Kofi Annan every success in his future professional and personal endeavours. We also wish every success to Mr. Ban Ki-moon as our new Secretary-General.

The President: I give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan.

The Secretary-General: I am deeply honoured and truly touched by the words that have been spoken. After 10 wonderful years as Secretary-General, it is humbling to be recognized for simply doing what you love to do.

Despite many difficulties and some setbacks, in the past decade we have achieved much that I am proud of. In a time of sweeping change and great challenge, the United Nations re-moulded and reoriented itself. It became more transparent, accountable and responsive. It began to better address the needs of individuals worldwide. It faced emerging threats, as well as familiar ones, head on. And, as we have heard this morning, it internalized the notions that development, security and human rights must go hand in hand, that there can be no security without development and no development without security, and that neither can be sustained in the longer term without being rooted in the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Credit for those changes must also go, first of all, to you — the States Members of the Organization. You have guided the Organization, supported its mission and made far-reaching reform possible. Let me also thank the truly exceptional men and women who serve the United Nations. Whatever I have achieved I owe to their commitment and support, both in the field and at Headquarters. It is they who have lent me their shoulders; it is they who deserve your praise and my gratitude.

For me, personally, their and your steadfast support and encouragement have often made the difference between an impossible job and an exhilarating one. Their friendship has sustained me over the years, and it is the treasure that I shall take into private life. I depart convinced that today's United Nations does more than ever before and that it does it better than ever before. Yet our work is far from complete. Indeed, it will never be complete. It falls to my successor to carry forward the valuable mission of the United Nations. From the contacts that I have had with him, I already know that you have chosen well. Our Organization will be in safe hands.

Mr. Ban, let me congratulate you again on your appointment. You have already had a long and very distinguished career in international diplomacy. But I can safely tell you that your most rewarding years lie just ahead. I wish you both the strength and the courage to make the most of them.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

The General Assembly will now continue with the appointment process of the Secretary-General-designate, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I am deeply honoured to welcome the Secretary-General-designate, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to take the oath of office. I wish once again to extend my congratulations to Mr. Ban Ki-moon on his appointment as the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations. He will follow a long line of world-class leaders stretching back over 60 years. Each one has embodied the values and principles of the Charter through his own unique style and approach.

I am confident that the Secretary-General-designate, Ban Ki-moon, will lead the Organization wisely and with determination and integrity. This is a reflection not only of his core Asian values, but also of his faith in the United Nations family and his personal commitment to ensure that it lives up to its universal values and principles.

Ban Ki-moon has already signalled his commitment to lead the Organization in a focused and action-oriented manner, working transparently, flexibly and honestly with Member States to, as he puts it, cut through the fog of mistrust so that, working in harmony, the United Nations can deliver more for

those who need it most. Indeed, the credibility of the Organization will be tested by our ability to continue to work in unity with purpose to meet the expectations of millions of people around the world. The promises that the United Nations has made should be kept.

As President of the General Assembly, I am ready to work in close cooperation with Secretary-General-designate Ban Ki-moon on the three challenges that he has made priorities once he takes office on 1 January 2007: first, to continue to reform the Secretariat by bolstering the integrity, professionalism and morale of staff; secondly, to work to heal divisions and rebuild trust among Member States, the Secretariat and the global public, which we serve; and thirdly, to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of the United Nations in implementing its mandates and to increase the coordination and harmonization of the work of its various parts.

As he prepares to assume his responsibilities and duties, I would appeal to all members once again to extend to him their utmost support and cooperation. Next year, we could begin a new era of closer harmony at the United Nations. There are many important matters of common concern that require our close attention. We have to work more closely together, in a spirit of cooperation, mutual trust and collective responsibility.

The post of Secretary-General is considered to be one of the most difficult jobs in the world. I am confident that, leading by example, Ban Ki-moon has what it takes to make a great contribution to the Organization and to the global public that it exists to serve. Let me take this opportunity to wish him the greatest success in this, our common endeavour.

I now invite the President of the Security Council, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the President of the Trusteeship Council, the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Main Committees to come to the platform.

The President of the Security Council, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the President of the Trusteeship Council, the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Main Committees took places on the platform.

The President: I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the Secretary-General-designate, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to the platform.

The Chief of Protocol escorted the Secretary-General-designate, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to the platform.

The President: Your Excellency, by resolution 61/3 of 13 October 2006, the General Assembly has appointed you Secretary-General of the United Nations for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2007 and ending on 31 December 2011.

I ask Mr. Ban to repeat after me the oath of office.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon: I, Ban Ki-moon, solemnly swear to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me as Secretary-General of the United Nations, to discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of the United Nations only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other authority external to the Organization.

The Chief of Protocol escorted the President of the Security Council, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the President of the Trusteeship Council, the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly and the Chairpersons of the Main Committees from the platform.

The President: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General-designate, to make a statement.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon: Madam President of the General Assembly, Secretary-General and Madam Annan, Presidents of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, Mr. Han Seung-soo, Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear new colleagues: I thank you warmly for you congratulations. Madam President and Secretary-General Annan, let me say how much I appreciate your words of encouragement as I contemplate the responsibilities before me.

I stand before all of you today, deeply mindful of the words of the oath I have just taken: loyalty, discretion, conscience — these, together with the Charter, will be my watchwords as I carry out my duties as Secretary-General. To illustrate my faith in the Charter, today I asked the Secretariat to create a new practice by placing my left hand on the Charter while taking the oath.

Secretary-General Annan, I am all the more humbled because it is you I am succeeding in what you have described as the world's most exalting job. It is an honour to follow in your revered footsteps. I add my voice to the many tributes that have been paid to you today. Every one of them is richly deserved. Your tenure has been marked by high ideals, noble aspirations and bold initiatives. Your courage and vision have inspired the world. You have led the Organization through challenging times and ushered it firmly into the twenty-first century. You have given the United Nations new relevance to people's lives. You have been exceptionally generous to me with your wisdom and guidance, as I prepare to build on your legacy.

Thanks to the early conclusion of the appointment process, I have had the unprecedented privilege of more than two months of preparation before taking office. I have spent much of this time listening to and learning from my future colleagues among the delegations, in the Secretariat and in the wider United Nations family.

I have witnessed at first hand the high level of professionalism, dedication and know-how that exists throughout the United Nations. Armed with that knowledge, I look forward even more to working with the able and courageous men and women who serve this Organization every day, often in difficult circumstances, sometimes in dangerous ones.

Today, as we pay tribute to Secretary-General Annan's lifelong devotion to the international civil service, we also pay tribute to the calling itself. This path is narrow and steep and transcends national borders and partisan interests. Many stumble along the way, or take easier detours. Yet, drawn to the enduring purposes and principles of the Charter, young women and men from all parts of the world, from every creed and every circumstance, still yearn to follow this path less travelled. Their enthusiasm and their idealism will animate this Organization for decades to come.

One of my core tasks will be to breathe new life and inject renewed confidence into the sometimes weary Secretariat. As Secretary-General, I will aim to reward the talent and skill of staff, while making optimal use of their experience and expertise. I will seek to improve our systems for human resource management and career development, offering opportunities for training and mobility. With the United Nations taking on a more and more global role, United Nations staff members should also be able to be more mobile and multifunctional.

At the same time, I will seek to set the highest ethical standard. The good name of the United Nations is one of its most valuable assets — but also one of its most vulnerable. The Charter calls on staff to uphold the highest levels of efficiency, competence and integrity, and I will seek to ensure that a solid reputation for living up to that standard is built. I assure you that I will lead by example. In this way, I will work to enhance morale, professionalism and accountability among staff members, which in turn will help us serve Member States better and restore trust in the Organization.

(*spoke in French*)

Equally, we should remind ourselves of what the Charter and the Report of the Preparatory Commission at the San Francisco Conference in 1945 said about the relationship between the Member States and the Secretariat. Neither of these founding documents suggests, at any point, that the Secretariat should be independent of the Member States. Indeed, without States, neither the Secretariat nor the Organization itself would have meaning or purpose.

Member States need a dynamic and courageous Secretariat, not one that is passive and risk-averse. The time has come for a new type of relations between the Secretariat and Member States. The dark night of distrust and indifference has lasted far too long. We can begin by saying what we mean, and meaning what we say.

We cannot change everything at once. But we can build progress in a few areas, and so make way for progress in many more. That will require intensive and continuous dialogue. It will require us to work together transparently, and with flexibility and integrity. And it will require us to start with an open mind. Today, I ask both colleagues and Member States to work with me in that spirit. You have the right to expect the same of me.

(*spoke in English*)

As I have pledged today, my sole duty is to the Organization, its Charter and its 192 Member States. Each brings something special to our common endeavour. Each must be heard. Ultimately, we are all — Secretariat and Member States alike — accountable to "we the peoples". Our publics will not long respect an Organization, or tolerate a Secretary-General, who caters to some while ignoring the desperate plight of others. Together, we can — and must — do better. Our peoples and our future depend on it.

By strengthening the three pillars of the United Nations — security, development and human rights — we can build a more peaceful, more prosperous and more just world for our succeeding generations. As we pursue our collective endeavour to reach that goal, my first priority will be to restore trust. I will seek to act as a harmonizer and bridge-builder. And I hope to become known to all of you —Member States and Secretariat alike — as a Secretary-General who is accessible, hard-working and prepared to listen attentively.

I will do everything in my power to ensure that our United Nations can live up to its name and be truly united, so that we can live up to the hopes that so many people around the world place in this institution, which is unique in the annals of human history.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General-designate for his statement.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General-designate, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 104.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.